

## [Mollie Mauney]

September 20, 1939.

Mollie Mauney, Housewife

Newton, N.C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser. Original Names Changed Names

Mollie Mauney Mattie Moore

Bettie Joe Sara Ann

Jimmy Buddy

Newton Bakerton

Lloyd Mauney Floy Moore

Clyde Claude

Ruby Reba C9 - N.C. Box 1

“Come in, I declare I ain't got a thing done today. I get up and get the children off to school and it wears me out. My younguns never will learn to wait on theirselves. Sara Ann couldn't find her pencils, Buddies got a sore foot, and I had to bind it up, Junior is too lazy of a morning to eat his own breakfast. It just about wears me out.

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Mattie Moore, a little eighty pound nervous woman dropped down on the settee. "What a life! If I'd knowed this before I was married I'd never had no man a living. I've got five children and not one of them is worth their salt."

While she turned her head to better comb her stringy hair. I looked around. The house was a pretty five room bungalow. The living room was neat and clean and contained a nice suit of furniture, a good rug and pretty curtains. A dog lay curled up in an easy chair.

"I can give you a story all right. If I'd tell you what a time I have had to keep things going here you'd be surprised. I've had it hard all my life."

Mattie kicked off her bed room slippers and tucked her feet up in the chair. "The breakfast table is setting there and the dishes ain't washed. I don't care I'll rest a while. I was raised on the farm. My daddy owned his farm, but he wasn't much of a farmer and we was always poor. There was five of us children. All the education I got was at 2 the free school in the little one room school building. When I was eleven years old we moved to the cotton mill.

"I'm thirty eight years old now. Them times younguns went to work as soon as they was big enough. Father got me a job, ball winding. I made three dollars a week and we worked twelve hours a week day. My feet hurt me so bad after standing on them all day I cried. The bottoms swelled up so bad I could hardly walk.. My boss was good, that's more than you can say of some. Three of us worked. Things was cheap then, and we made a good living. We moved from Bakerton to Long Island where I worked for awhile there. Later we moved here to the old cotton mill.

"That's where I met Floy Moore. He worked in the spinning room and I spooled. When I was eighteen we got married. Floy was a good steady boy, who didn't drink , he worked hard and made a good husband. I worked on a year after marriage, as long as I could. Then we went to housekeeping. Several years we got along and I was happy. Then he began to sell some whiskey. I hate the stuff, and tried to stop it. Talking did no good he

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kept right on at it 'till he got caught. Being his first offense he got off light, seventy five dollars looked big to me to pay out. It's like this though, when a man starts to sell whiskey he keeps it up. After he breaks the law the first time, he don't mind it the next. I've talked my tongue sore at that man. It done no good he kept right on selling."

3

Mattie wiped an imaginary tear away, and slid to her feet as some one knocked on the door. Outside the door a man asked something in a low voice. "No, Floy ain't here," Mrs. Moore spoke loudly, "He ain't here and I am glad of it. Maybe he is getting pay fer some of his meanness. If he had listened to me he'd been here where his place is. Instead of that he kept on and now he's had to leave the state." The man drove away.

"Floy's been selling whiskey off and on for twenty years. He had a good job in the silk mill weaving and made thirty dollars a week. I stayed here at home and worked and slaved. What he done with his money I don't know. Yes, I do know too, it was spent on other women. Course we lived good, had plenty of everything we wanted. I expect we had more to eat than rich people. His grocery bill run as high as thirty dollars a week. Two years ago he built this house, and he has spent a lot of money fixing up the place. We have electric lights, water and everything in this house. That ain't the thing though, he slipped off and run around at night.

"When the new sheriff went in he sent Floy word to quit selling liquor. Floy paid no attention to him. They searched the place, found whiskey and it cost him a hundred dollars. He said he'd quit but he didn't do it. Somebody reported him again and they caught him the third time. The last time they got him he was under a suspended sentence and couldn't pay out. The mill disapproved of what he was 4 doing, so they refused to work him unless he would go to Cuba and work in the silk mill there. The court permitted him to pay out if he would leave the county six months, so he's in Cuba now working out his sentence. He makes forty dollars a week as loom fixer. We sure don't live as high as we did. I only

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get eighteen dollars a week, that don't go far with six of us to feed and the building and loan to pay.

"My health is bad. I've been trying to get me a job in the mill. I worked about a year ago but now it's hard to get on. I've worked off and on ever since we been married. It ain't much I can't do in the mill. I have spooled, spinned, run the winders and worked in the knitting room. The most I ever made was in war times. Wages was high then and I got nineteen dollars a week. The least I ever made was three.

"Floy gives the children too much money when he is at home and sells whiskey. Everywhere they want to go he gives them money to go. We had a nice car. Two weeks after he went to Cuba Clyde turned it over and tore it up. Out there it sits now, and no money to fix it up. The same week he left Reba run away and got married. She's in there in bed now. She don't do a thing. I tell her when I was pregnant I done all my house work. It's not going to kill nobody to have a baby. Some folks think if there is anything wrong with them they can't move.

"We ain't got a car now. I have to hire a 5 way for the children to get to school. Last year our taxi bill run as high as ten dollars a week, and we run a car besides. I go to the show three or four times a week. I don't go to church. I belong to the Lutheran, the children go to the Baptist to Sunday School. I never miss a good ball game if I can help it. Floy and me both vote a Democrat ticket. I don't know as I'll do it next year though. That snoopy sheriff ain't done nothing but make trouble since he's been in."

The bed room door opened, and a tall, slender girl dressed in pale blue pajamas stood in the door way. "Mama why don't you be quiet? I can't sleep."

"It's no time to sleep here at eleven o'clock, Why don't you go to the kitchen and clean up the dishes?"

"What do you think I'm made of, I'm so sick I can't hardly stand up."

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Mattie snorted, "Reba what do you think is going to become of you if you lie in bed for nine months? I tell you I never done such a thing."

"I have no intention of doing what you done."

"You see that's they way my children treat me. I blame their daddy fer it. If he'd stayed at home and done his duty they'd be different."

Reba went into the dinning room, filled a glass with tomato juice and cracked ice. "My stomach is so upset."

"I am not surprised," said Mattie, "you're so 6 mean to me it's a wonder more'n your stomach ain't upset."

A car stopped at the door and her son, Claude, come in and asked if his pants had been pressed. " No, honey, they ain't. You didn't tell me to press them."

"The devil I didn't , I told you last night I wanted them today."

"I didn't hear you."

"What the hell is wrong with you that you can't hear?"

"She's been busy telling her troubles," said Reba covering up with the silk counterpane on the bed. Claude turned on the radio.

A taxi stopped at the door. Three children came in. Junior, Sara Ann and Buddy. "Mama," said Junior, "we had a taxi bring us home 'cause it's too far to walk."

"Do you realize we ain't got the money to pay taxis now and your daddy in Cuba? Look here boy don't you do that again."

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"We want some warm dinner."

"I ain't cooked no dinner yet, you had your lunches with you."

"Nobody don't get nothing to eat around here," spoke Claude from behind the paper.

"I declare I get so ashamed of the way my children acts. It's not my fault I've done my best to raise them right. They've spent more money for foolishness than most families have to live on. Then they ain't satisfied. When 7 I grewed up I never know what it was to have a dime or go to a show.

"I'm so sorry you have to go. I wish you could spend the day with me. Come out and see my flowers. I sure have worked hard on my garden."

The lawn was dry but every effort had been made to beautify the place with flowers and shrubs. The house stood on a knoll, a small stream along which weeping willows and climbing roses had been planted, ran by the garden at the foot of the hill.

Jimmy come to the door and hollered. "Mama I want to go to the show."

"No, honey you can't go today, there's no money." Jimmy screamed and cried.

I thanked her for the story and departed. As I turned the curve I looked back at the bungalow and thought:—